

Commercial and Industrial Buildings,
Thomas J. Mulgrew Company Office Building
30 Main Street
Dubuque
Dubuque County
Iowa

HABS No. IA-160-BK

HABS
IOWA,
31-DUBU,
13-BK -

**PHOTOGRAPHS
HISTORICAL AND DESCRIPTIVE DATA**

Historic American Buildings Survey
Department of the Interior
National Park Service
Rocky Mountain Regional Office
P.O. Box 25287
Denver Colorado 80225

Thomas J. Mulgrew Company Office Building

HABS
IOWA
31 - DUBU
13 - BK -

HABS No. IA-160-BK

Site Location: 30 Main Street
Dubuque, Dubuque County, Iowa
DOT designation: Resource Site No. 5.12
Cadastral grid : NE1/4 SE1/4 S25 T89N R2E
USGS quadrangle: Dubuque South Iowa 7.5'
UTM coordinates: 15.692100.4706940
Lot dimensions : 97.6'x 66' : .15 acre
Lot description: West 1/2 of Lot 1 of Lot 1 of
Block 10 of Dubuque Harbor Company Addition

Present Owner: Four Seventy Associates

Present Usage: office

Present Condition : good

Overall Dimensions: 49'x 32'; 2 stories

Orientation : west

Architectural Plan type : 2-story trapezoidal with truncated corner.

Description : Foundation: coursed limestone ashlar perimeter walls with
tooled stone watertable.

Structure : wood frame

Ext. walls: painted stucco

Roofs : moderately pitched hipped roof over main block,
covered with glazed ceramic tiles; small gabled
canopy with ceramic tiles, exposed rafters and
curvilinear wood brackets cantilevered from
wall over corner entrance; composition flat
roof over rear addition.

Chimneys : one brick exterior chimney on side wall.

Openings : painted wood l/l double-hung windows (either
single or paired) with simple hoodmolds,
casings and slip sills throughout; small fixed-
sash, sidewalk-level basement windows; single-
leaf front door in truncated corner, with
semicircular transom and stone stairway.

Details : modest half-timber panel under canopy, boxed
and molded cornices on main roof with
plain-board soffits

Construction Date : 1915

Architecture Style: Mediterranean

Physical History : In 1915 Thomas Mulgrew constructed this two-story brick
office building near his extensive warehouse complex on the corner of Main and
Jones streets. Built for \$5,000 on the former site of the Southern [Smyth's]
Hotel and a one-story commercial building, the structure was slightly wedge-
shaped to conform with the acute angle of the intersection. Its stuccoed
walls, paired windows with contrasting headmolds, hipped roof with glazed tile
sheathing and relatively wide overhangs earmark the building as Mediterranean -

one of the traditional styles in vogue during the period. Mulgrew's firm continued wholesaling building and fuel products for decades, though in a reduced capacity in later years, and in 1965 the building was shared by the Mulgrew Oil Company and Cullen and Schlitz, consulting engineers. After a brief vacancy, the offices were taken over in 1974 by Shive-Hattery and Associates, engineers, who occupy it at present. The Mulgrew Oil Company is still in business, but not at this location; all of the associated storage and loading structures have been razed. The only noteworthy addition to the building has been the construction of a small one-story rear addition.

Significance: Born in Dubuque in 1867, Thomas J. Mulgrew began his working career as a bellhop in the Julien Hotel. Several jobs later, he worked as the manager for the Hansen and Lincoln Coal Company. Mulgrew left that company after eight years to begin his own coal supply firm in May 1893. Nine years later he incorporated the Mulgrew-Boys Company with a capitalization of \$100,000 to handle coal, ice, lime, cement, building materials, sewer pipe and brick and tile. Mulgrew was a Democrat, an Elk and a Catholic. In addition to his wholesale supply company, he served as a director of the Dubuque National Bank, the Dubuque Art Manufacturing Company and the Dubuque Industrial Association and owned a cotton plantation in Mississippi. A Dubuque business gazette described his wholesale operation in 1911: "The office, yards and ice houses are advantageously located at Jones and Iowa Streets and occupy a ground space of four acres. A spur from the Illinois Central Railroad runs to each yard, affording the speedy loading and unloading of cars. An average number of forty men are employed, more being needed during the winter season. The payroll represents a sum of \$25,000 yearly. This plant excels any in the state of Iowa in facilities for storing, handling and shipping coal and ice." Four years later, as Mulgrew's company was thriving, he erected this modest building to house his business offices. The last structure remaining from what was once an extensive complex along the Illinois Central Railroad, this office building is significant for its association with an important early Dubuque industry. Virtually intact, it reflects one of the prevailing styles of its time and retains a high degree of architectural integrity.

References: Dubuque City Directories: 1857 - 1970.
Sanborn Insurance Maps: 1879, 1884, 1891, 1909, 1972.
Iowa State Gazetteer and Business Directory: 1882-1918.
Dubuque County Assessment Record: 3-16-10-4.
Franklin T. Oldt and P.J. Quigley, *History of Dubuque County, Iowa* (Chicago: Goodspeed Historical Association, 1911), page 851.
H.W. Gardner, *Greater Dubuque* (Dubuque: The Times Journal, 1911), page 37.
Dubuque Daily Herald: 26 December 1915.

Compiler: Clayton S. Fraser, Fraserdesign, Loveland Colorado
November 1988.